

# **AIRPORT TO PARK CONVERSION REPORT**

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SANTA MONICA AIRPORT TO PARK

# CONVERSION REPORT

MARCH 2020 DRAFT



PART OF THE SANTA MONICA 2020 PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

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# 1

## INTRODUCTION

## Overview

This Airport to Park Conversion Report looks at the Santa Monica Airport as it is today, current legal posture of the closing of the Airport, and potential pathways forward to develop the Airport land into park space for the City of Santa Monica. Through the examination of case studies, this report outlines the advantages and disadvantages of each approach as a tool for future conversion.

### Airport to Park Study Area

The extents of analysis for this report consist of the Airport itself along with connections to areas directly adjacent to it, such as the Santa Monica Business Park, existing Airport Park, and Clover Park. Boundaries for the study area are Ocean Park Boulevard to the north, Bundy Drive to the east, 23rd Street to the west, and the southern city border. Regional assets that fall outside of this zone were also taken into consideration, such as the Metro Expo Line, bus lines, freeways, etc.

## Background

### WHAT IS THE LUCE?

The Land Use and Circulation Element is a key component of Santa Monica's General Plan, establishing the City's land use, urban design, and transportation vision. This policy document provides a long-term framework for implementing this vision and is a tool for good decision making. The LUCE provides flexibility for changes in the City's economy and land use and establishes criteria and measurements for periodically assessing how well the community's goals are being met and if adjustments to the policies are necessary.

The 2010 Land Use and Circulation Element (LUCE) Update is a vision and plan for the next 20 years and reflects a six-year community input

process. The adopted comprehensive rewrite of the Zoning Ordinance implements many aspects of the LUCE, and provides a clear, accessible, and easily administered Zoning Ordinance that can be understood by all. The Zoning Update allows land use policies to be translated directly into standards that implement the goals and objectives of the LUCE on a daily basis.

### WHAT IS MEASURE LC?

Measure LC was a ballot measure passed by Santa Monica voters in 2014. The measure amended the City Charter to prohibit new development on Airport land permanently closed to aviation use unless voters approve limits on the uses and development that may occur on the land. The measure, however, permits the City Council to approve the development of parks, public open spaces, and public recreational facilities, and the maintenance and replacement of existing cultural, arts, and education uses on the land. Measure LC also affirmed the authority of the City Council to permanently close all or part of the Airport to aviation use.

In 2017, the City Council reached an agreement with the Federal Aviation Administration that allows for the closure of the Santa Monica Airport (SMO) on December 31, 2028. A City Council action to close the Airport will be required. This agreement also allowed the City to shorten the runway by approximately 1,500 feet, which was completed with markings in 2017 and pavement removal in 2019.



## AIRPORT PARK EXPANSION

A community input and design process for future park expansion of the existing Airport Park was completed in 2018. Design for the 12-acre expansion includes two additional multipurpose fields striped for lacrosse, soccer, and rugby. A continuous walking loop will take exercisers from one end of the park to the other, with a new pedestrian entrance from Bundy Drive and an overlook with views of the city, Airport, and ocean.

The park will also feature a fitness area, pickleball courts, community gardens, ping pong tables, new restroom buildings, and swings to be used by park users of all ages.

Construction of this project is pending identification of funding but should be completed before the Airport closes. Momentum from the expansion should help drive the future Airport to park conversion.









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# ANALYSIS



## Context

The Santa Monica Airport is a 227-acre site that sits at the southeastern corner of the City of Santa Monica, with a small portion of the Airport extending into the City of Los Angeles. Less than two miles from the beach, one can feel the proximity to the coast and, on a clear day, the Pacific Ocean can be seen from the current runway. The existing Airport site is shaped by Bundy Drive on the east, Airport Avenue to the south, 23rd Street on the west, and Clover Park and Santa Monica Business Park on the north (See Figure 1). The site is stitched in close proximity to the regional roadway network via the 10 and 405 freeways. There are multiple bus routes nearby, and the nearest Metro Expo Line Station (Expo/Bundy) is located within one mile of the Airport.

**Figure 1: Airport Site**



## Adjacent Land Use

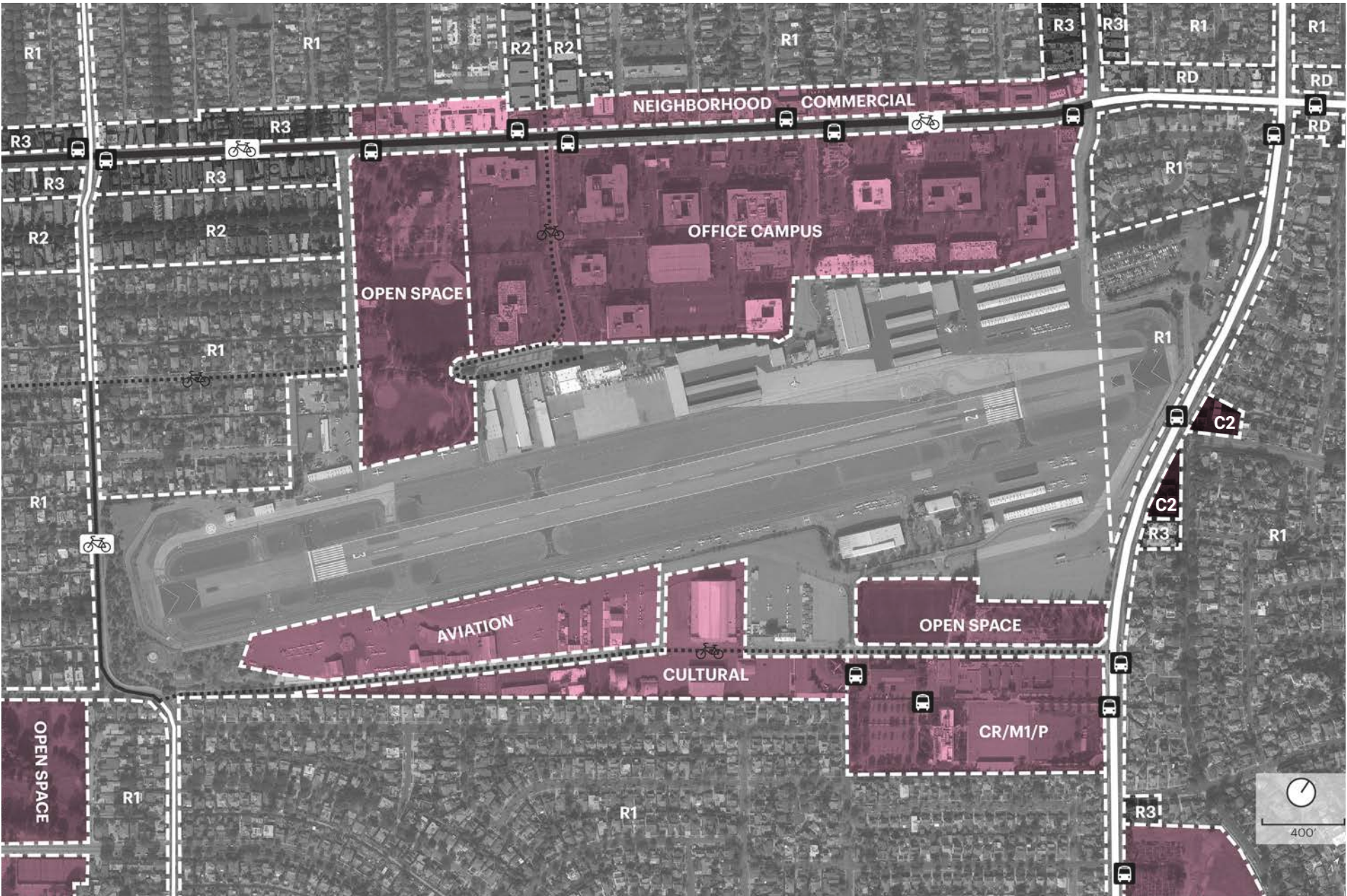
The site is surrounded by a patchwork of residential, open space, cultural, academic and office space, however, much of the adjacent land is zoned for R1, or single-family residential. Denser residential zones, such as low density residential (R2) and medium density residential (R3), can be found closer to the commercial corridor along Ocean Park Boulevard. Between this neighborhood commercial district and the existing Airport site are Clover Park and the Santa Monica Business Park, zoned for Open Space and Office Campus respectively. These areas border the Airport and form

most of its northern boundary. To the south of the Airport, more open space exists (existing Airport Park), along with a cultural corridor along Airport Avenue. There is also limited commercial, light industrial, and the Santa Monica College Bundy Campus on the south side of the Airport. As is illustrated in the accompanying diagram (Figure 2), these zones are connected by a series of bus routes and bicycle paths. On the east and west ends of the existing Airport site, there is a significant grade change between the runway and both 23rd Street and Bundy Drive.





Figure 2: Airport Adjacent Land Uses

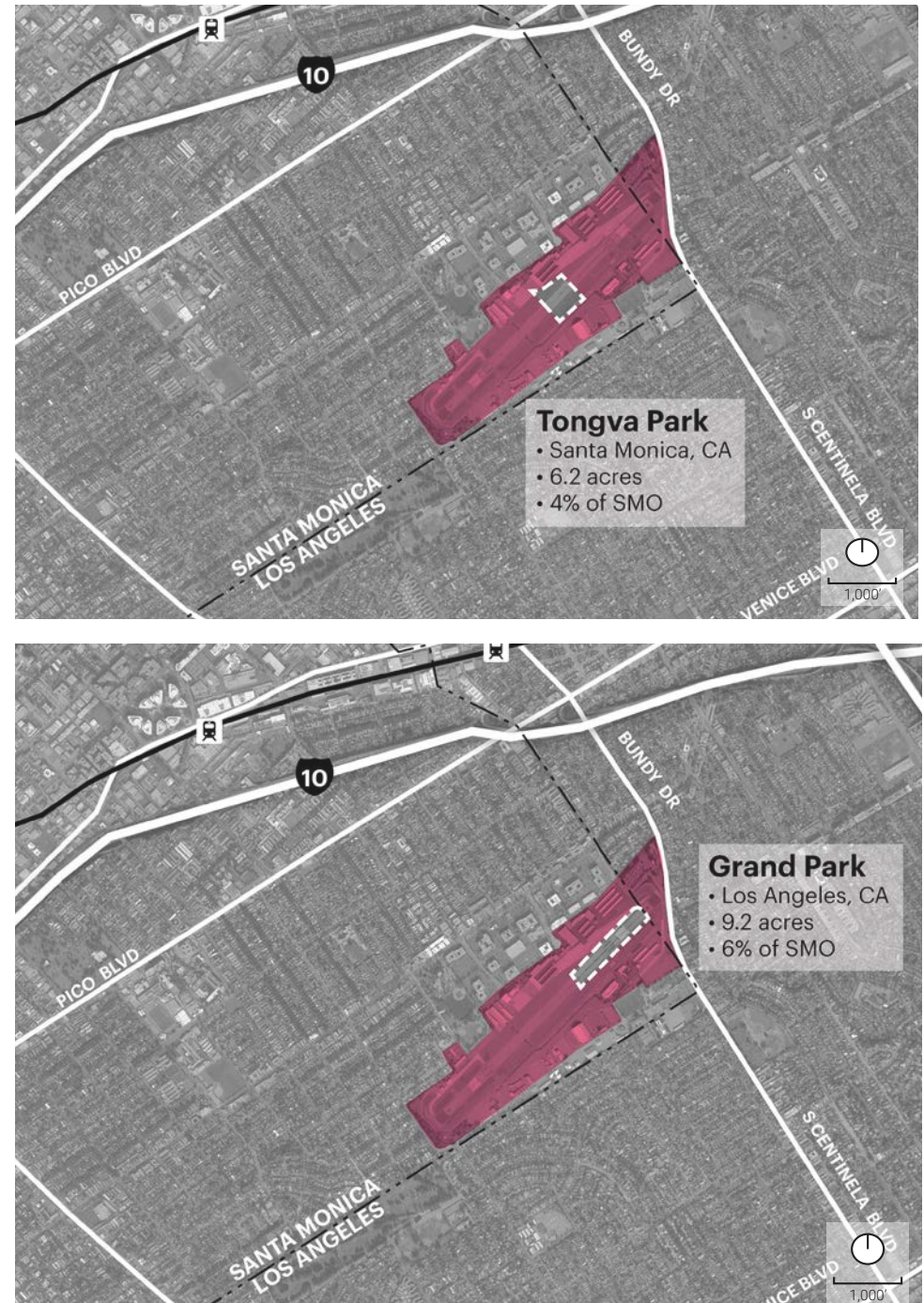




## Scale Comparisons

In order to better understand the scale of the Airport property, Figure 3 shows ten well-known parks from throughout the world were compared in scale with the Airport and its surrounding context. (The scale comparisons depict Santa Monica Airport in pink.) It is important to note that while the total land of the Santa Monica Airport is 227 acres, not all of that land can be converted into park, as many of the existing Airport buildings and their uses will likely remain in the future. It's also important to note that most of these park scale comparisons and subsequent case studies are situated in cities that are significantly larger than the City of Santa Monica and have more resources available for building and maintaining parks.

Figure 3: Scale Comparisons













## Issues and Opportunities

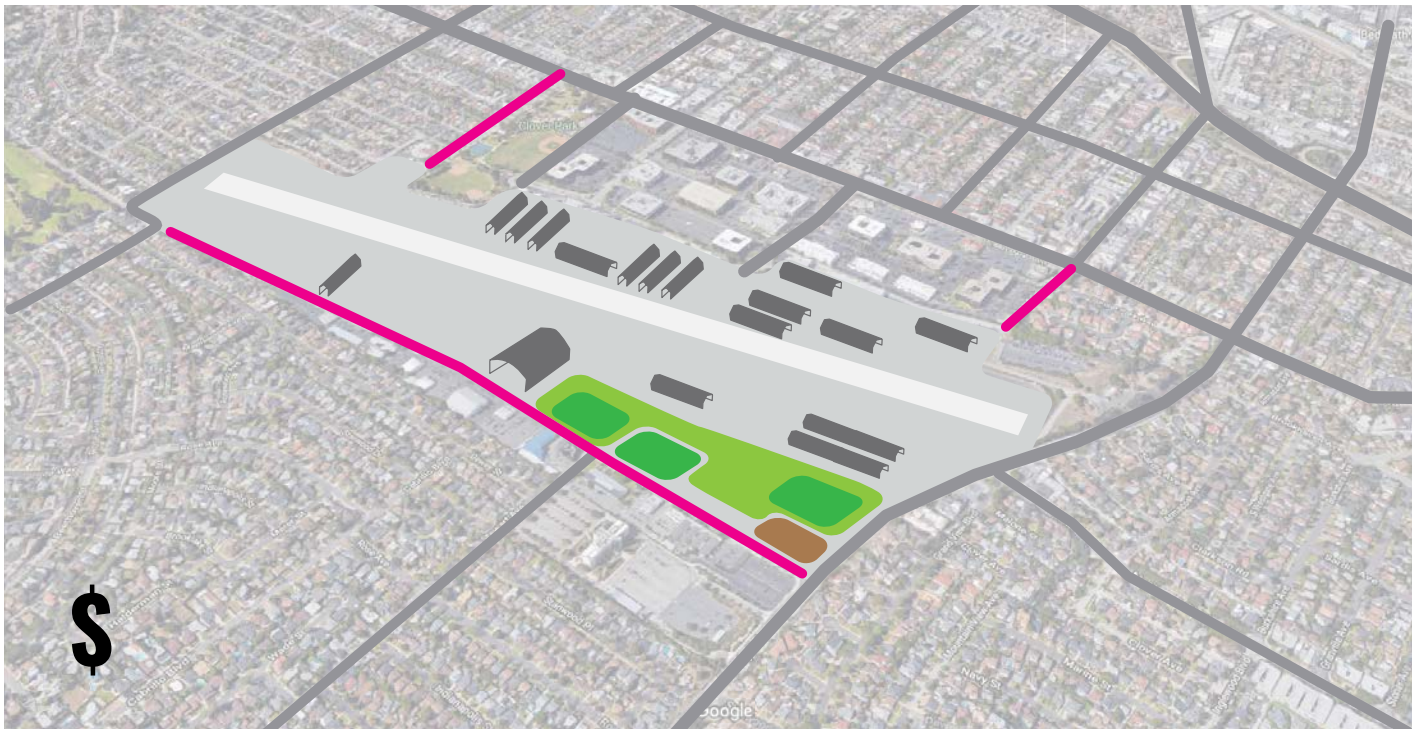
### IMPROVING ACCESS

One of the main issues surrounding the Airport site is access. While it is positioned close to multimodal regional transit systems, the connector roads are tight and local roads are not designed to handle existing volumes of traffic. These diagrams are meant to illustrate that access changes would be needed to provide connectivity to and through the site, and do not represent a design or analysis of transportation considerations (See Figure 4). Access options would be developed in subsequent phases of planning and design.

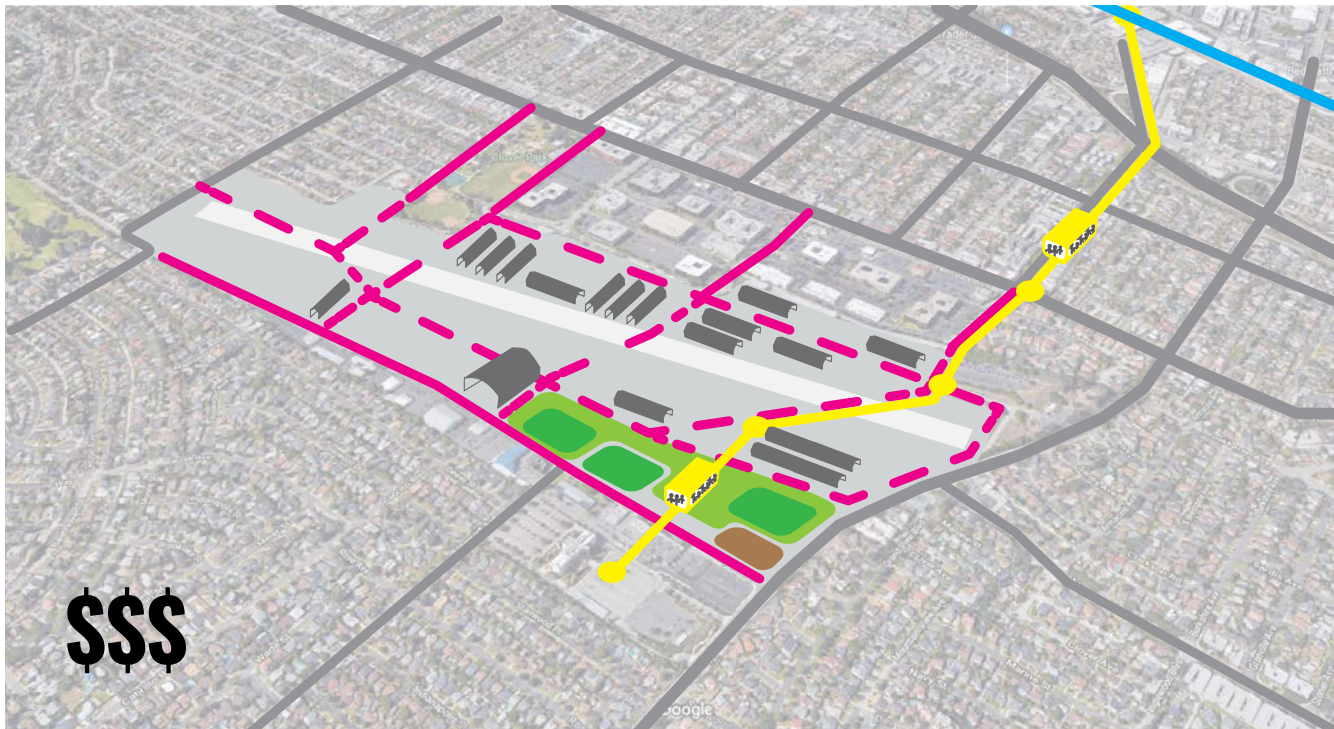
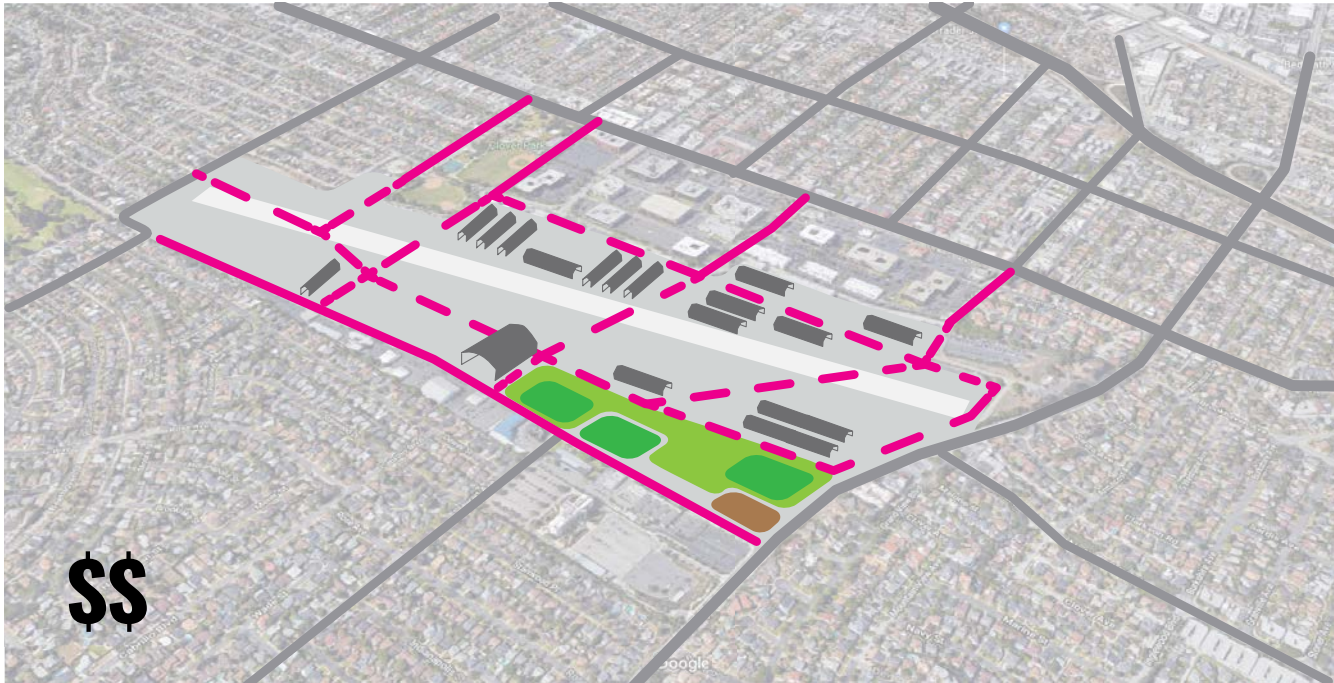
The first diagram with the smallest associated cost would be to improve existing points of connection, including improvements to

Airport Avenue. The second scenario expands upon the first, and also creates new roads through the site. The third scenario, with the highest associated cost, builds upon the first two and includes creating a connection from the Metro Expo Line to the Santa Monica College Bundy Campus through the park via a people mover or tram. Stops could occur at Ocean Park Boulevard, Santa Monica Business Park, the post-closure Airport Park, and Santa Monica College Bundy Campus. In all scenarios, bike access should endeavor to connect to existing bike corridors and bus connections should be explored. The Sepulveda Corridor Transit project under study by Metro should follow a Centinela path (instead of the alternative 405 freeway path) between University of California, Los Angeles and Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), with a stop here.

**Figure 4: Level of Access Improvements**









## PARK AMENITIES

Determining the level of investment for converting the Airport to a park is a major consideration. There are many possible approaches to designing a park on this site. These diagrams are meant to illustrate varying levels of site transformation, and do not represent a design (See Figure 5).

The first diagram shows the possibility of minimal intervention, where much of the existing conditions would remain and restoration of softscape would occur selectively. New park infrastructure and amenities would be minimal, and park uses would likely include recreational trails and open areas for flexible uses. The second scenario expands upon the first with more hardscape removal, planting, and spaces for active programming. The last diagram shows the possibility of an amenity-rich park, with ample opportunities for programming and activities, and would have the highest associated cost.

**Figure 5: Levels of Amenity Improvements**











Chicago, Illinois 91 Acres **Northerly Island**



Dallas, Texas 5.2 Acres **Klyde Warren Park**



as  
ox, 20% for park)  
1 opened 2015  
(phase 1 and 2)  
6 million (estimated)\*  
Antonio, Hemisfair Park Area  
poration (nonprofit local government  
y Corp., private partnerships and  
and play area, giant chess  
business

Where: Los Angeles, California  
How Big: 32 acres  
When: Est. 2001, opened 2006  
How Much: \$18 million  
Operating Costs: \$1.6 million

by the California Department of Parks and Recreation  
...walking/running paths, open lawn, elevated  
...cycle, art installations  
...of former industrial site to  
...allow the park to host music  
...floor movie screenings;  
...transportation; the park was

Los Angeles, California 32



City, Ne

# 3

## APPROACHES AND CASE STUDIES



## Public Approach

The Public Approach is a scaled-up version of conventional park implementation; the City would be the lead using public funds. The accompanying diagram illustrates the conversion of Airport land to park space and an increase in parking and access (See Figure 6). Existing Airport building uses and revenue would be considered as part of this plan. The Public Approach is traditionally found in large cities and would be very challenging in a city the size of Santa Monica.

## Policy Implications

No changes to Measure LC.

## Funding & Budget

Would require a significant levy or bond and annual subsidies for maintenance and programming; would have the most limited budget.

## Programming Capacities

More modest improvements, like representative case studies.

Figure 6: Public Approach Example





## TEMPELHOF FIELD

### Where

Berlin, Germany (pop. 3.58 million)

### How Big

750 acres

### When

Est. 2008, opened 2010

### Operating Cost

\$21.2 million (estimated)\*

### Who

City of Berlin, Grün Berlin (state-owned company responsible for multiple city parks)

### What to Do

Running/bicycling paths, open lawn, nature preserve, community garden, event space, sports fields, BBQ/ picnic areas, dog park

### What We Like

Although construction is prohibited on the former airfield, the existing buildings are still rented out; some of the existing buildings will be used as a tech campus; Tempelhof Conservation Act establishes strict preservation rules; in 2014, 63.4 percent of voters rejected plans to develop a quarter of the site

\*Data unavailable; estimate based on U.S. averages (NPRA)





## NORTHERLY ISLAND

### Where

Chicago, Illinois (pop. 2.72 million)

### How Big

91 acres

### When

Est. 2010, opened 2015

### How Much

\$9.7 million

### Operating Costs

\$3.8 million (estimated)\*

### Who

Chicago Park District and Army Corps of Engineering

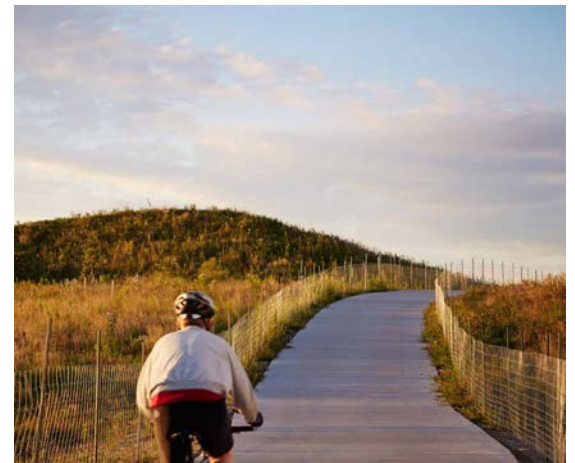
### What To Do

Bicycling/running paths, open lawn, nature preserve, access to the lake, concert venue, adjacent to museum campus

### What We Like

Conversion of former airfield to park land; restoration of natural habitats; comprehensive framework plan allows for future amenity development

\*Data unavailable; estimate based on U.S. averages (NPRA) plus costs budgeted for onsite Pavilion



## LOS ANGELES STATE HISTORIC PARK

### **Where**

Los Angeles, California (pop. 4 million)

### **How Big**

32 acres

### **When**

Est. 2001, phase 1 opened 2006

### **How Much**

\$18 million

### **Operating Costs**

\$1.6 million

### **Who**

California Department of Parks and Recreation

### **What To Do**

Bicycling/running paths, open lawn, elevated outlook, campfire circle, art installations

### **What We Like**

Conversion of former industrial site to park land; large open spaces allow the park to host music festivals, crafts fairs, and outdoor movie screenings; easily accessible by public transportation; the park was developed and opened in phases





## Public+ Approach

The Public+ Approach is also known as the benefactor model. The City would seek significant private donations to fund the park, likely in partnership with a park authority solely focused on the redevelopment and operation of this park. The accompanying diagram illustrates more conversion of hardscape to park land and increased access through the park than the Public Approach (See Figure 7). Existing Airport building uses and revenue would be considered as part of this plan.

## Policy Implications

Likely no change to LC, possible refinements regarding park operation and ongoing revenue opportunities from concessions, events, etc.

## Funding & Budget

Would require significant private donations from people and corporations with naming opportunities and possible tie-ins to operation and use of the park; could have more robust budget.

## Programming Capacities

More robust improvements and variety of amenities, like representative case studies.

Figure 7: Public+ Approach Example



## SMALE RIVERFRONT PARK

### Where

Cincinnati, Ohio (pop. 301,301)

### How Big

45 acres

### When

Est. 2008, opened 2012, completed 2018

### How Much

\$122 million (53% public, 47% private)

### Operating Costs

\$2.3 million

### Who

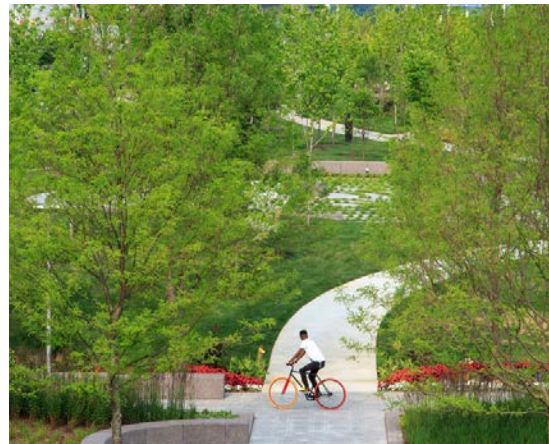
Cincinnati Park Board and Parks with City, State, Federal and private funding

### What To Do

Bicycling/ running paths, open lawn, banquet center with carousel, bicycle mobility center, farmers' market esplanade, mounded garden with swings, lighted fountain, rose garden and tree grove, adventure playground, labyrinth, Ohio River Trail, river access, water feature plaza, shaded porch swings, event lawn and stage

### What We Like

Wide variety of programming; phased with adjacent mixed-used development; important part of urban infrastructure connecting the football and baseball stadiums





## KYLDE WARREN PARK

### Where

Dallas, Texas (pop. 1.34 million)

### How Big

5.2 acres

### When

Est. 2004, completed 2012

### How Much

\$110 million (49% private, 18% City, 18% State, 15% Federal)\*

### Operating Costs

\$2.6 million

### Who

Owned by the City of Dallas, operated and managed by Woodall Rodgers Park Foundation

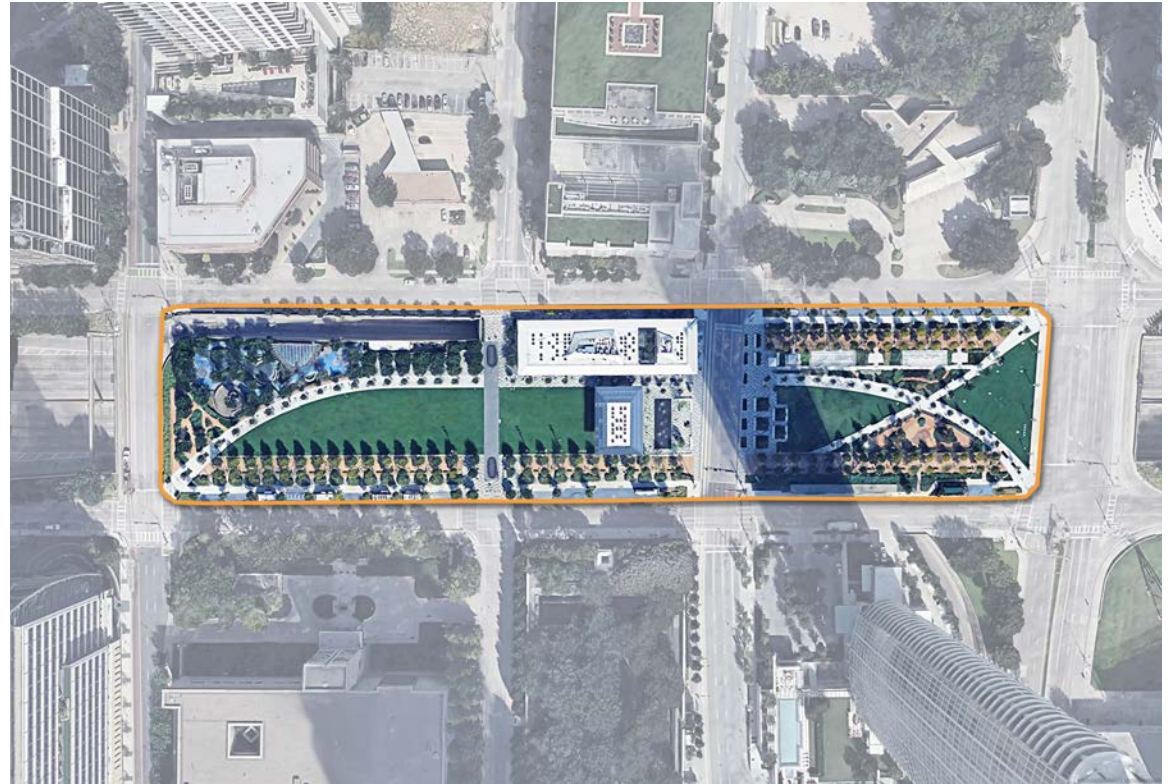
### What To Do

Bicycling/running paths, open lawn, botanical garden, children's park, reading room and library, plazas with water features, restaurant/ cafe, performance venue, lounge area, games tables and carts, food trucks, butterfly garden

### What We Like

Variety of funding sources utilized, including private, local, state and federal grants

\*Cost includes the price of building the freeway deck



## GOVERNORS ISLAND

### **Where**

New York, New York (pop. 8.62 million)

### **How Big**

150 acres

### **When**

Est. 2003, phase 1 opened 2006

### **How Much**

\$291 million (phase 1 and 2)

### **Operating Costs**

\$16 million

### **Who**

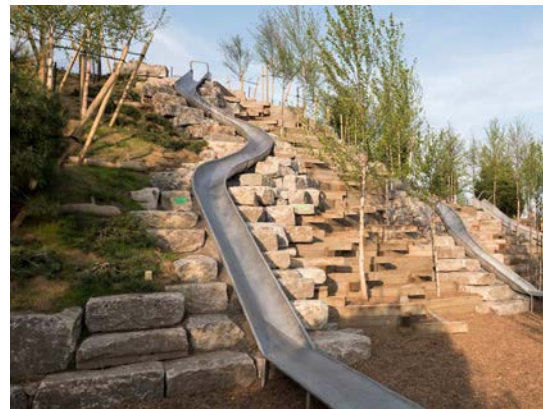
The Trust for Governors Island (not-for-profit created by NYC), The Friends of Governors Island (nonprofit)

### **What To Do**

Bicycling/running paths, open lawn, adjacent to Governors Island National Monument, scenic overlooks, playgrounds, art exhibits, summer camps, kayaking, sports fields, interactive fountains, camping, zip-line, maze, mini-golf, historic tours

### **What We Like**

The park utilizes historic structures on site for leasing opportunities; variety of funding methods are used; although residential development is prohibited, recent rezoning efforts would allow for approved new construction to fund operating and maintenance costs





## Public-Private Partnership Approach

In a Public-Private Partnership, the City or an empaneled nongovernmental organization (NGO) would enter into a partnership with neighborhood development interests. The accompanying diagram illustrates new development opportunities inside and outside of the Airport boundary. Increased access through and within the park, including public transportation connection to the Expo line could be possible under this model (See Figure 8). Airport Avenue could be realigned to allow multimodal access and improve intersections.

## Policy Implications

Voter approval would be needed to modify uses allowed under Measure LC.

## Funding & Budget

Would require neighborhood development of a portion of the park to generate revenue for park development and operation; would be able to secure more robust budgets.

## Programming Capacities

Most robust improvements, like representative case studies.

Figure 8: Public-Private Partnership Approach Example





## ORANGE COUNTY GREAT PARK

### **Where**

Irvine, California (pop. 277,453)

### **How Big**

1,347 acres (approx. 27% for park)

### **When**

Est. 2003, phase 1 opened 2006

### **How Much**

\$1.1 billion (voter approved cost in 2002)

### **Operating Cost**

\$21.7 million

### **Who**

Orange County Great Park Corporation  
(nonprofit governed by Irvine City Council), City  
of Irvine, Lennar Corp., FivePoint Communities

### **What To Do**

Great Park Balloon, carousel, farmers' market, Farm+Food Lab, soccer stadium, soccer fields, volleyball courts, tennis courts, basketball courts, open lawns, fitness complex, ice facility, reflecting ponds, arts complex, walkable historic timeline, heritage and aviation exhibition

### **What We Like**

Voters passed Measure W in 2002 calling for the former air base to be used as a regional urban park, nature preserve and multi-use development





## HEMISFAIR PARK

### Where

San Antonio, Texas (1.49 million)

### How Big

92 acres (approx. 20% for park)

### When

Est. 2009, phase 1 opened 2015

### How Much

\$68 million (phase 1 and 2)

### Operating Costs

\$2.6 million (estimated)\*

### Who

The City of San Antonio, Hemisfair Park Area Redevelopment Corporation (nonprofit local government corporation), Zachary Corp., private partnerships and donations

### What To Do

Splash pad, sand play area, giant chess and checkers, climbing structures, swings and spinners, picnic tables, fitness events, convention center, theatre, restaurants, cultural institutions

### What We Like

Redevelopment of former World's Fair site that utilizes existing structures for revenue; proposed mixed-use development on site can bring in people and tax revenue

\*Data unavailable; estimate based on U.S. averages (NPRA)





## DOWNSVIEW PARK

### Where

Toronto, Canada (pop. 2.93 million)

### How Big

291 acres (approx. 60% for park)

### When

Est. 1999

### How Much

Not Available

### Operating Costs

\$16.2 million (estimated)\*

### Who

Canada Lands Company and Parc Downsview Park (federal commercial Crown corporations), private partners

### What To Do

Running/bicycling paths, nature preserves, ponds, sports fields, gardens, play areas, event spaces, greenhouse, urban farming, go-karts

### What We Like

Park is mandated to fund itself with areas dedicated for revenue-generating opportunities on site; the park is a former air base; Downsview Lands, a development area adjacent to the park, was created simultaneously as Downsview Park

\*Data unavailable; estimate based on U.S. averages (NPRA)





## Pros and Cons

Each approach presents opportunities and challenges for consideration, which are presented in the chart below.

### PROS

#### **PUBLIC APPROACH**

- The public entity has full control and the discretion to choose a design program that is non-commercial in nature

#### **PUBLIC+ APPROACH**

- More park amenities may be possible due to greater funding options
- A variety of public and private funding sources can be utilized
- Operational project costs and execution risks can be shared among participants
- Membership organizations, in particular, often can mobilize volunteers and monitor their work more easily than public agencies can

#### **PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP APPROACH**

- Allows for significantly more park amenities and better infrastructure solutions
- Development brings people (activation) and revenue to support park development or operations
- Can result in faster project completion and reduced delays
- Innovative design and financing approaches become available, without relying on a tax paid by residents
- Operational project costs and execution risks can be transferred from the City to the private participant
- By increasing the efficiency of the City's investment, public funds can be redirected to other City initiatives

## CONS

- Limited funding results in less budget for innovative design
- Limited funding results in less budget for capital improvements and amenities
- Limited funding results in less budget for ongoing maintenance and operations
- Dependency on grants and funds from other governmental agencies may cause delays
- Fundraising and advocacy largely lands on public entity and may be less effective

- Public entity shares control of decision-making
- Requires significant coordination with outside groups
- Requires an active and strong partner to manage fundraising and advocacy

- Public entity shares control of decision-making
- Generally requires some land area to be devoted to non-park uses for revenue generation
- Funding may be tied to private neighborhood development, and market drivers may delay project



Similarities and Dissimilarities

No case study will exactly parallell the future Airport to park conversion in Santa Monica. The chart below outlines the similarities and differences between each case study and the process of converting the Santa Monica Municipal Airport to a park.

SIMILARITIES TO THE POST-CLOSURE AIRPORT PARK

PUBLIC APPROACH	Tempelhof Field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Former airfield</li><li>Use of existing onsite buildings provides revenue</li><li>Surrounded by urbanized area and uses</li></ul>
	Northerly Island	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Former airfield</li><li>Comprehensive Framework Plan allows for future amenity development</li></ul>
	Los Angeles State Historic Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Located in the Los Angeles region</li><li>Surrounded by urbanized area and uses</li></ul>
PUBLIC+ APPROACH	Smale Riverfront Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Surrounded by urbanized area and uses</li></ul>
	Klyde Warren Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Surrounded by urbanized area and uses</li></ul>
	Governors Island	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Focus on resiliency and sustainable development</li></ul>
PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP APPROACH	Orange County Great Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Voter-initated conversion of a former airfield and base</li><li>Limited transit access</li></ul>
	Hemisfair Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Surrounded by urbanized area and uses</li></ul>
	Downsview Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Former air base</li></ul>

## DISSIMILARITIES TO THE POST-CLOSURE AIRPORT PARK

- Berlin is significantly larger than the City of Santa Monica
  - Existing airfield was primarily softscape, whereas SMO has significant paving which will be more costly to remove and need environmental mitigation
  - Chicago is significantly larger than the City of Santa Monica
  - A large, independent park district was already in place to manage Northerly Island
  - Embedded location within existing hub of museums/stadiums with associated infrastructure, and SMO lacks robust mass transit access/hub of existing uses
  - Much smaller in size and scale at 32 acres
  - Proximate transit via Metro Gold Line (although not open when the park was planned)
  - The site is owned, developed, funded, and managed by the State Parks Agency
- Cincinatti Park Board already in place has a robust fundraising structure
  - Integrated into larger urban infrastructure connecting football and baseball stadiums
  - Much smaller in size
  - Park surrounded by cultural institutions that support the park
  - Included construction of a freeway deck to create new parkland
  - Robust transit system supports access via ferry
- Surrounding areas are generally low density
  - Park improvements and operations supported by a Redevelopment Corporation
  - Existing airfield was primarily softscape, whereas SMO has significant paving which will be more costly to remove and need environmental mitigation



## What We Heard

Santa Monica held a Community Open House at Tongva Park on March 9, 2019 to receive community input for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update. The Open House attracted more than 230 people and was immediately followed by an online version (available between March 11 and March 25) through which an additional 231 people provided input. One of the Open House stations specifically asked for input about the case studies presented in this report.

Participants reviewed the nine visual examples, indicated which case studies resonated most, and provided comments about each case study and opportunities for Santa Monica.

## WHICH CASE STUDIES RESONATE?

**“REPURPOSES UNDERUTILIZED SPACE FOR RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES (I.E., BIKING, WALKING, AND RUNNING)”**

—SMALE RIVERFRONT PARK

**“COLORFUL PLAY AREA AND TREES”**

—HEMISFAIR PARK

**“EXEMPLIFIES PARK DEVELOPMENT HAPPENING IN PHASES”**

—TEMPELHOF FIELD

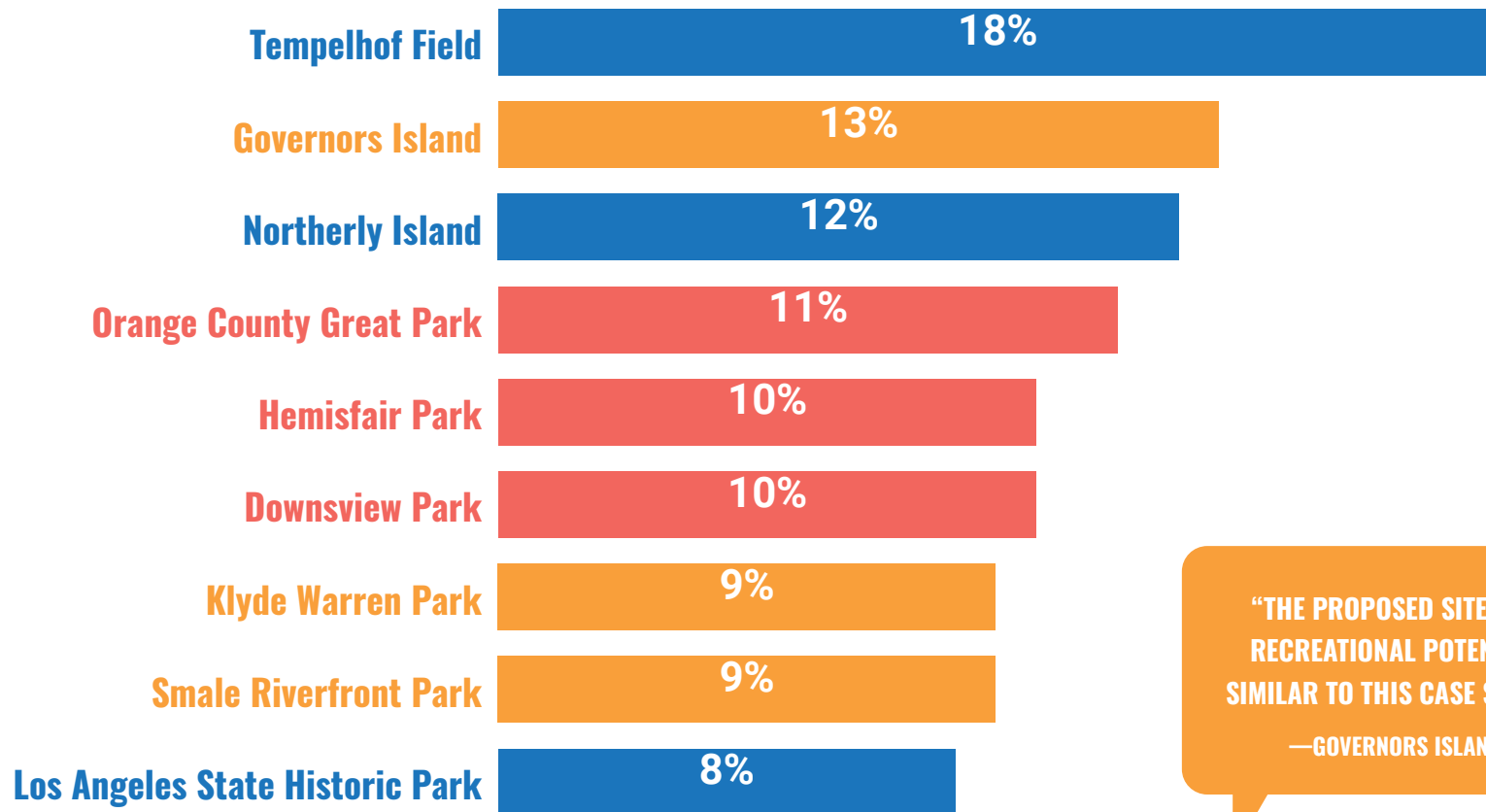
**“BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN ACCESSIBILITY”**

—NORTHERLY ISLAND

**“AESTHETICALLY PLEASING AND COMMUNAL”**

—KYLDE WARREN PARK

**“AMENITIES INCLUDING THE ARTS COMPLEX, ICE RINK, YOUTH SPORTS PROGRAMMING ”**



**"THE PROPOSED SITE HAS  
RECREATIONAL POTENTIAL  
SIMILAR TO THIS CASE STUDY"**

**—GOVERNORS ISLAND**

**"INTEGRATES ECOLOGICALLY  
SENSITIVE DESIGN AND HABITAT  
RESTORATION"**

**—DOWNSVIEW PARK**

**"VENUE FOR MUSIC FESTIVALS"**

**—LOS ANGELES STATE HISTORIC PARK**







# 4

## **ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS TO PARK CONVERSION**



## Goals for the Post-Closure Airport Park

The process to achieve the post-closure Airport Park is multi-faceted and complex, and there are multiple pathways that the City may consider for implementation. Regardless of approach and process, the post-closure Airport Park will embody the following goals:



### CONNECTED.

Enhance connections and integration to local transit and regional connectors to provide multimodal transportation access to the park.



### INCLUSIVE.

Provide programs and opportunities for all. Meet the broad recreational needs of Santa Monica and the regional community. Integrate inclusive play opportunities for all ages, abilities, and types of play.



### FLEXIBLE.

Design the park with flexible and multi-use infrastructure to adapt to changing preferences and optimize programming capabilities.



### SUSTAINABLE.

Support Santa Monica's sustainability and climate change resiliency priorities by advancing green infrastructure and urban greening initiatives at the park.



### CELEBRATORY.

Celebrate the history of the site through design and interpretation and involve existing cultural and educational facilities.



### INCREMENTAL.

Incrementally build improvements to allow for financial self-sustainability and changes in recreational and use preferences.



### SELF-SUSTAINING.

Require the post-closure Airport Park to be a financially self-sustaining facility. Allow for revenue generating opportunities to support the development and ongoing operations and maintenance of the park.



### COLLABORATIVE.

Support public agency partnerships and consider public-private partnerships to develop and maintain the park, as well as to provide community benefits, improvements, and park safety.

## Governance Structures

As the case studies illustrate, there are many variations on the governing structure to design, build and operate a public park on the site of Santa Monica Airport. The governance structure is a key step and will determine decision-making authority and the range of possible approaches for all subsequent decisions, including the planning and design approach. Qualifying approaches are indicated under each governance structure.

### PUBLIC

#### ***Public***

The City of Santa Monica takes on all responsibilities for the design, development and operation of the new park. The City's approach to operating Santa Monica State Beach is a successful example of this governance approach.

### JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY (JPA)

#### ***Public, Public+***

Joint Powers Authorities are legally created entities that allow two or more public agencies to jointly exercise common powers and are governed by California Government Code section 6500. There are two types of JPAs. The first allows the public agencies to contract to jointly exercise common powers. The second allows two or more public agencies to form a separate legal entity and is likely the better approach for the operation of a new park. Under this structure, a JPA would be negotiated and established between the City of Santa Monica and at least one other public agency. The JPA would create a separate legal structure for the design, development and operation of the new park. Potential partners include the City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District, Santa Monica College, Metro, and Big Blue Bus.

### PRIVATE CORPORATION AS CONCESSIONAIRE

#### ***Public, Public+, Public-Private Partnership***

Recreation management companies provide visitor services through concession agreements with public agencies. Most typically used at state or national parks, these arrangements include contracts, often long-term (10, 15 or 20 years), that specify the responsibilities and obligations of the concessionaire. This structure requires a park that includes revenue-generating services, facilities or features, often campgrounds or hotels. For example, Yosemite Hospitality LLC (a division of Aramark) operates and makes capital improvements in Yosemite National Park under the terms of an agreement with the National Park Service.

### PARK CONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY

#### ***Public+, Public-Private Partnership***

A Park Construction Authority would be an independent park design and construction agency created at a state level through legislation. This agency would be governed by a Board of Directors with the possibility of additional representation through a JPA or other advisory committees. After construction is completed, the project would need to be transferred to a separate organization for operation, formalized in a Master Cooperative Agreement. The completion of the Foothill Gold Line was accomplished through this model.

### PARK CONSERVANCY

#### ***Public+, Public-Private Partnership***

Conservancies are private, nonprofit organizations that raise money independent of the city and spend it under a plan of action mutually agreed upon with the government. The city typically retains ownership and final decision-making authority and has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in place with the conservancy that spells out the conservancy's responsibilities for design, development and operation of the park, as well as any required public benefits. The conservancy typically has a strong executive director who oversees conservancy staff and



reports to a large board of directors that includes representation from the city. Conservancies typically have strong fundraising abilities and strength in contract management. While the word “Conservancy” may be used in the name of an organization, the organization may not be a park operator as this model envisions (e.g., Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy). The Guadalupe River Park Conservancy in San Jose is an example of a park conservancy formed for the design, development and operation of Guadalupe River Park, envisioned to become an “active, iconic, world-class central park”. The Klyde Warren Park case study illustrates the use of a park conservancy to develop and operate a new major park. Klyde Warren Park’s foundation (Woodall Rogers Park Foundation) was established in 2004 and opened the park in 2012.

## LESSONS LEARNED

The case studies reveal several lessons learned about governing structure that may influence Santa Monica’s decision on how to proceed. The table on the next page summarizes the park-specific nonprofit organizations associated with each of the case studies.

- Most case studies have one or more nonprofit organizations formed specifically for the site, indicating that nonprofit conservancies or foundations are a key ingredient for success. The exceptions are two of the Public examples (Northerly Island and Los Angeles State Historic Park), both of which are operated by very large public agencies that have effective umbrella nonprofits in place that fundraise for all their parks.
- A government-established nonprofit corporation is a common approach to park development and operation. All three Public-Private Partnership case studies used this model, as did the largest of the Public+ (Governors Island). In these cases, the nonprofit functioned as a park construction authority.
- The Women’s Committee of Smale Riverfront Park is an example of a park-specific fundraising organization that takes its nonprofit status from the parent Cincinnati Parks Foundation rather than having its own 501(c)(3) status.
- Three of the nine case studies used a nonprofit to develop and operate the park, paired with a nonprofit specifically focused on raising money for the park.

	CASE STUDY	NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION ASSOCIATED WITH THE PARK
PUBLIC APPROACH	<b>Tempelhof Field</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grün Berlin GmbH (not-for-profit corporation created by the City of Berlin)</li> <li>• Grün Berlin Foundation (nonprofit)</li> </ul>
	<b>Northerly Island</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No park-specific nonprofit organizations</li> </ul>
	<b>Los Angeles State Historic Park</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No park-specific nonprofit organizations</li> </ul>
PUBLIC+ APPROACH	<b>Smale Riverfront Park</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Women's Committee of Smale Riverfront Park (nonprofit, subcommittee of the Cincinnati Parks Foundation)</li> </ul>
	<b>Klyde Warren Park</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Woodall Rodgers Park Foundation (nonprofit)</li> </ul>
	<b>Governors Island</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governors Island Corporation, dba The Trust for Governors Island (not-for-profit corporation created by New York City)</li> <li>• Friends of Governors Island (nonprofit)</li> </ul>
PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP APPROACH	<b>Orange County Great Park</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orange County Great Park Corporation (not-for-profit corporation created by Irvine City Council)</li> </ul>
	<b>Hemisfair Park</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hemisfair Park Area Redevelopment Corporation (not-for-profit created by San Antonio)</li> </ul>
	<b>Downsview Park</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canada Lands Company (self-financing federal Crown corporation – the Canadian version of the not-for-profit corporation)</li> </ul>



## Funding Avenues

Multiple funding mechanisms will be required for capital improvements, maintenance and operation. This section outlines the major funding avenues that may be pursued. Qualifying approach(es) are indicated under each funding source.

### GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND

#### ***Public, Public+, Public-Private Partnership***

A general obligation ("GO") bond is issued by a local taxing authority and is repaid by ad valorem property taxes. General obligation bonds must be approved by a two-thirds majority per State law and are established for the timeframe to repay the bond, typically 20 years.

### MELLO-ROOS COMMUNITY FACILITIES DISTRICT

#### ***Public, Public+, Public-Private Partnership***

The Mello-Roos Community Facilities Act of 1982 allows counties, cities, special districts, school districts or joint powers authorities to establish a Mello-Roos Community Facilities District (CFD) for financing public improvements and services, which can include infrastructure, public safety services, parks and cultural facilities (including libraries and museums). The CFD must be approved by two-thirds majority of residents within the district boundaries, or by the landowners if there are fewer than 12 residents.

### PARCEL TAX

#### ***Public, Public+***

A parcel tax is a levy on individual parcels of property. The parcel tax is typically set at some fixed amount, whether a fixed amount per parcel or based on factors such as size or square footage. Parcel taxes cannot be based on a property's value. The Los Angeles County Parks Tax Measure is a parcel tax. Under a joint powers authority, a parcel tax could be levied on areas outside of the City of Santa Monica. A parcel tax is a special tax and requires two-thirds voter approval.

### ASSESSMENT DISTRICT

#### ***Public, Public+, Public-Private Partnership***

An Assessment District is a special financing district formed by a local government agency (county, city, water district, etc.) and includes property that will receive direct benefit from the construction of new public improvements or from the maintenance of existing public improvements. The Landscaping and Lighting Act of 1972 created Landscape and Lighting Assessment Districts (LLADs) specifically to fund acquisition, improvement and operation of streets, parks, open spaces and community centers are one type of Assessment District used for parks and park improvements. A benefit formula charges the assessment on each parcel based on the amount of benefit received. A majority of property owners within the proposed assessment district must approve the district formation.

### REVENUE BOND

#### ***Public, Public+***

Revenue bonds are paid by project-generated revenue or dedicated revenue stream, such as a particular tax or fee. These do not require voter approval but do require a dedicated revenue stream from the project itself.

### EARNED INCOME FROM PARK OPERATIONS

#### ***Public, Public+***

Once the park is open, earned income from operating the park is a potential funding source, especially for operations. Santa Monica State Beach is operated by earned income from a mix of parking fees and concessions revenue.

## GRANTS

### ***Public, Public+, Public-Private Partnership***

Both private entities and public agencies offer a variety of grant programs. Most park and recreation grant funds originate with either the Federal or State government and are limited to funding the acquisition, design and construction of parks, facilities and trails. The active list of grant programs regularly changes, as Federal and State budgets expand and contract, and the application schedule and process must be learned and monitored. Further, most grants require that the local agency match a percentage of the funding with local dollars

## PHILANTHROPIC CAMPAIGN

### ***Public, Public+, Public-Private Partnership***

A campaign for philanthropic giving can be used to generate funding for capital development and potentially for an operational endowment. Most campaigns of this nature are created by nonprofit organizations, rather than by public agencies. In some cases, a major gift may result in a facility being named after a donor.

## NAMING RIGHTS SPONSORSHIP

### ***Public, Public+, Public-Private Partnership***

A naming rights sponsorship allows an entity to purchase the right to name a facility or event for a specified period of time. Naming rights are often used as a mechanism to fund arenas and sports stadiums

## PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS (P3, P4, ETC.)

### ***Public+, Public-Private Partnership***

Public-private partnerships involve collaboration between a government agency and a private-sector company that can be used to finance, build, and operate projects, such as public transportation networks, parks, and convention centers. Financing a project through a public-private partnership can allow a project to be completed sooner or make it a possibility in the first place.

## VALUE CAPTURE

### ***Public, Public+, Public-Private Partnership***

Value capture is the name given to a policy whereby governments capture some of the increased value of land that results from building a new piece of infrastructure. Typically, the money the government “captures” is used to help fund the project.

## ENHANCED INFRASTRUCTURE FINANCING DISTRICTS (EIFD)

### ***Public, Public+, Public-Private Partnership***

Enhanced Infrastructure Financing Districts were established in 2015 and may use Tax Increment Financing (TIF) for infrastructure projects. EIFDs were established after dissolution of redevelopment agencies in California and are governed under Section 53398.50 of the California Government Code. The EIFD has flexibility in what it can fund and does not require a finding of blight. No public vote is required to establish an EIFD. However, if bonds are issued against TIF revenues, approval by 55 percent of voters is required. A Joint Powers Authority is also typically needed if an EIFD is established. Since the laws establishing EIFDs are recent, there are few examples to explore. However, a Los Angeles River Revitalization EIFD is in the planning stages as a mechanism to fund implementation of the Los Angeles River Revitalization Plan.





Where: Los Angeles, California  
How Big: 32 acres  
When: Est. 2001, opened 2006  
How Much: \$18 million  
Operating Costs: \$1.6 million

Who: California Department of Parks and Recreation  
What To Do: Biking/ running paths, open lawn, elevated outdoor, amphitheater, art installations  
What We Like: Conversion of former industrial site to parkland; large open spaces allow the park to host music festivals, craft fairs, and outdoor movie screenings; easily accessible by public transportation; the park was developed and opened in phases



Los Angeles, California 32 Acres Los Angeles Music Park

Where: New York City, New York  
How Big: 21 acres  
When: 2003, opened 2006  
How Much: \$291 million (phase 1 and 2)  
Operating Costs: \$16 million

Who: The Trust for Governors Island (not-for-profit); NYC, The Friends of Governors Island  
What To Do: Biking/ running paths, open lawn, adjacent to the Statue of Liberty National Monument, scenic views, playgrounds, art exhibits, summer camps, sports fields, interactive fountains, camping, mini-golf, historic tours  
What We Like: The park utilizes historic structures on site; variety of funding methods are used; enough residential development is prohibited; efforts would allow for approved new construction to fund operating and maintenance costs



New York City, New York 150 Acres Governors Island

Where: Toronto, Canada  
How Big: 291 acres (approx. 60% for park)  
When: 1999



Toronto, Canada 572 Acres Downsview Park

CASE STUDY

**5**

## **NEXT STEPS**



## Near- and Mid-Term

The path from Airport to park involves multiple steps that must be initiated well in advance of the Airport's closure after 2028. This chapter outlines the near and midterm steps that Santa Monica should take towards converting the Airport to a park, setting out a critical path forward. Many of these steps may coincide or run concurrently, as indicated in the timeline on the next page. The timeline was developed to reflect a schedule that could allow for construction to commence immediately following the assumed Airport closure date. This timeline reflects estimates and optimistic assumptions about process and does not include potential delays or lack of funding. Additional detail on each of these steps is provided on the following pages.

The identification of the dedicated City staff team is the first step in moving forward with conversion of the Airport. The staff team will begin work in 2020.

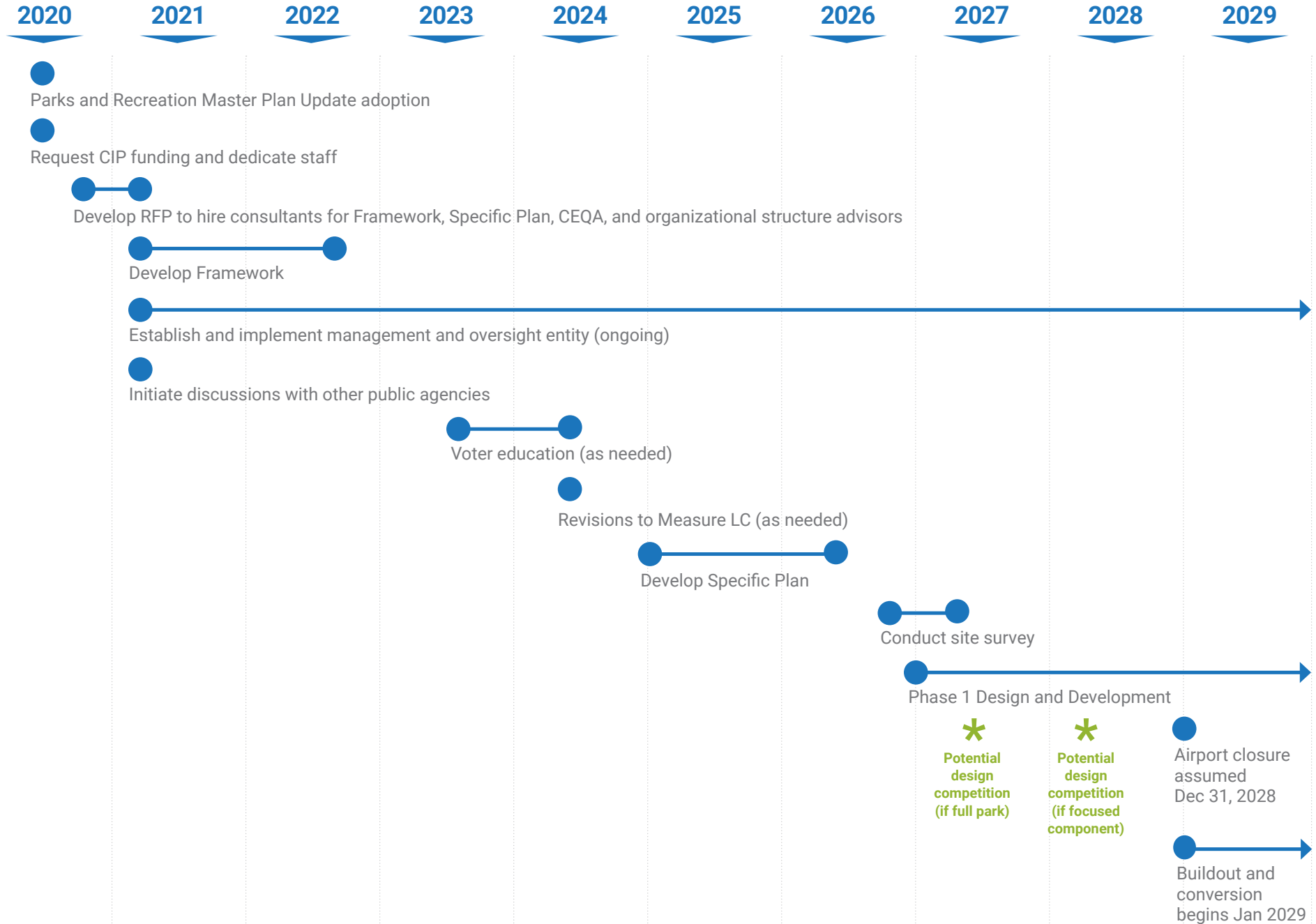
The first tasks of this team will be to develop Request for Proposal(s) and select a team of consultants to provide professional services for the multi-year planning process. The team of consultant's scope of work will include preparing the Framework and associated components (described in greater detail later in this chapter) developing the Specific Plan and related California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analysis and supporting the City in the development of any needed oversight entity.

## Organizational Processes

### DEVELOP MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

Given the complexities associated with a project of this scale, the City will need to establish a dedicated team of City staff members to ensure the project moves forward expediently and with the community's intentions represented. The City's dedicated staff team should at a minimum consist of four individuals, including one member with great relationships and a strong ability to build partnerships, a representative that understands park planning and urban design, a transportation and access specialist, and a financial expert. This team would spearhead the process and work with additional representatives from these disciplines or other expertise areas to augment the team as needed. As the implementation process progresses, the core staff team may be expanded beyond the originally identified members, depending on expertise needs and workload.

## TIMELINE AND NEXT STEPS





## IDENTIFY ORGANIZATION FOR OVERSIGHT AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS

A new public space of this scale will require 1) partnerships and 2) an entity to oversee and manage the park and potentially fundraise and lead support campaigns. This effort will run concurrently with other steps and will last the duration of the process.

**Partnerships:** The City's dedicated core staff team should engage potential public agency partners in individual discussions to determine their interest in becoming partners in the development and operation of the new park, regardless of approach. Potential public agency partners include Santa Monica College, Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District, the City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, Big Blue Bus, and Metro. In addition, the owner of the adjacent office park has expressed interest in discussions with the City to explore partnership opportunities. The City should consider these opportunities and determine if it is in the public interest to explore partnership opportunities associated with the parcel.

**Oversight:** The consultant team should support the City's efforts to identify potential partnerships and work to incubate a potential oversight structure. Examples of similar organizations associated with major public park developments include the Discovery Green Conservancy or the Millennium Park Foundation. Successful oversight organizations include representatives with expertise in fundraising, community relationships, public relations, financial management, legal, and political strategies. Long-term, this organization should have its own staff as well as an active Board of Directors.

### ACTION STEPS:

- Identify additional agencies and public partners and begin discussions in 2021.
- Begin laying the groundwork to establish and implement a management and oversight entity in 2021.

## Implementation Components and Plans

### ADOPT 2020 PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

Adoption of the updated Parks and Recreation Master Plan is the first step toward the future Airport to park conversion. The Master Plan sets the foundational vision for the park system, including specific goals for the post-closure Airport Park.

### ACTION STEPS:

- Begin implementation of the updated Parks and Recreation Master Plan in 2020.

### DEVELOP THE FRAMEWORK

To adequately plan for the future Airport to park conversion, policy guidance must be clearly laid out. The foundational guidance for the post-closure Airport Park will be the Framework. Using the three potential approaches (Public, Public+, and Public-Private Partnership) as a starting point, the Framework will describe at least three conceptual alternatives for the community and ultimately City Council's consideration. Each alternative will review the land use, design scale, transportation (including evaluation of regional transit connections to the post-closure Airport Park), and policy options for the future, as well as the implications of each alternative.

As a key part of the Framework, a market and economic analysis will be prepared to evaluate market feasibility of the different concept alternatives and the related financial implications and opportunities. The economic analysis will fully analyze up-front capital costs, life cycle and ongoing operational costs, and the most appropriate funding mechanisms to implement the various concept alternative scenarios. The alternatives will also describe recommendations for revisions to Measure LC (if necessary) and key partnerships and funding options.

As the case studies presented in this report illustrate, most large-scale new parks are not undertaken by small cities acting on their own, due to the magnitude of the project and the associated capital and operating costs. The conceptual alternatives should investigate at least one scenario that redevelops a portion of the Airport and should analyze the feasibility of a Mello-Roos Community Facilities District, an Assessment District, an Enhanced Infrastructure Financing District (EIFD), and potential revenue generation.

## FRAMEWORK COMPONENTS

- Market and Economic Analysis
- Conceptual Alternatives
  - Land Use
  - Design Scale
  - Transportation
  - Policy
- Governance Options
- Funding Plan

The community, and ultimately the City Council, will review the Framework and identify a preferred concept/approach.

### ACTION STEPS:

- Initiate the process to develop Framework in 2020.
- Bring the Framework to City Council for consideration in 2023.

## GO BACK TO VOTERS ON MEASURE LC IF REQUIRED

The pathway to park development may require another public vote on Measure LC. Based on the approach and concept identified by Council in the Framework, the City may choose to go back to voters on Measure LC to clarify or adjust requirements.

### ACTION STEPS:

- Determine if the pathway to park development requires another public vote by 2023.
- If yes, conduct a voter education effort and put a proposed revision to Measure LC on the ballot in November 2024.

## DEVELOP SPECIFIC PLAN

Once the preferred approach and concept is identified in the Framework, a Specific Plan will be prepared to refine the policy direction and address regulatory requirements. The General Plan Land Use and Circulation Element (LUCE GOAL D36) requires that a Specific Plan be adopted to plan for the Santa Monica Airport and adjacent business park area. A Specific Plan will provide guidance for development of park and open spaces, existing adjacent properties (including Clover Park as well as private properties within the business park). The Specific Plan will also identify the necessary infrastructure to support the post-closure Airport Park, including roads, pathways, and transportation linkages.

Specific Plans can vary significantly in complexity and schedule. The Specific Plan process will require a robust engagement strategy as well as high level design and master planning.



The Specific Plan will require an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The City should ensure that the CEQA document covers future implementing actions, including design, development and construction of the post-closure Airport Park. The final Specific Plan and CEQA documentation will be reviewed by the public and decision makers in preparation for adoption by the City Council.

#### **ACTION STEPS:**

- Initiate the Specific Plan in late 2024.
- Bring the Specific Plan to City Council for consideration to adopt at the end of 2026.

### **CONDUCT A SITE SURVEY OF THE AIRPORT PROPERTY**

To get ready for a park design process, the City of Santa Monica should develop a detailed evaluation of existing site features and access, including a construction site survey that will serve as the base map for design and an architectural evaluation of existing Airport structures, addressing their potential for reuse and changes in occupancy as recommended in the Framework.

#### **ACTION STEPS:**

- In late 2026, develop a scope and hire a firm to produce a site survey and evaluate existing buildings for programmatic potential based on their design.
- Complete the site and structures survey in 2027.

## **SPECIFIC PLAN COMPONENTS**

- **Vision:** A vision statement to guide development and public decision-making.
- **Land Use and Zoning Changes:**
  - A plan for uses for the Airport and a framework for land use decisions, and redevelopment opportunities and desired mix of uses for the business park and parking areas.
  - Development standards, guidelines, and specific criteria by which development will proceed, and opportunities for value capture potential from zone changes.
  - Recommendations that consider the interface with adjacent residential neighborhoods and neighborhood commercial uses along the north side of Ocean Park Boulevard, as well as areas located within the City of Los Angeles.
- **Streets and Transportation Linkages:**
  - Necessary circulation pattern and new streets to connect the Airport area to the larger context, with special consideration of the existing street grid.
  - Linkages and a plan to connect to existing and planned transportation systems as well as existing open space at Clover Park and Airport Park.
- **Infrastructure:** Required infrastructure improvements, including water, stormwater, sewage, and other utilities.
- **Implementation:** An implementation plan that addresses neighborhood development, including financing options and partnerships, criteria for project approvals, financing districts, governance approaches, and phasing.

## CONSIDER A DESIGN COMPETITION

The City may consider a design competition to spark interest and ideas for the post-closure Airport Park. A design competition, if held, should occur after the City Council has adopted the Specific Plan. An important feature of a successful design competition is a clear brief that outlines parameters and grounds the competition in financial realities. This way, the City's design competition guidance can clearly articulate the City's goals and existing constraints for a more viable response from participants and ultimately a more buildable design.

The design competition may apply to the entire post-closure Airport Park area. Alternatively, the design competition process may be focused on one component, piece, or area of the park, such as a nature play feature or community forest.

### ACTION STEPS:

- If a competition is desired, develop a competition brief that describes the project challenge, parameters, and goals and solicit designers to participate in the competition. For a design competition that applies to the entire post-closure Airport Park, conduct the competition following completion of the Specific Plan and Site Survey (in 2027). For a focused design competition that addressed a particular feature of the park, the timing should occur once the park's design is established.

## COMMENCE PHASE 1 DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

To initiate Phase 1 Design and Development, the City will need to address conceptual design layouts of the park and park amenities including orientation, circulation and access, massing, primary building materials and elevations, green infrastructure, and building and landscape palettes and have identified funding to implement.

The overall design should define phases of development to complete as funding is available. Each phase should result in a visible and usable section of park. This step should include a Phase 1 Design and Development package, scaled to the available funding for both construction and operations, and ideally timed so that construction can begin right after the assumed Airport closure.

### ACTION STEPS:

- Develop a scope and hire a consultant team to design the entire park, with the professional services contract executed in early 2027.
- Identify a Phase 1 Design and Development budget for a portion of the land area in mid-year 2027.
- Bring the design to City Council for consideration to adopt in early-to-mid 2028.
- Develop construction documents for Phase 1 implementation and conduct bidding by late 2028.